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AUTHOR Derenbach, Rolf
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ABSTRACT

This summary of the plans for additional research in the project called "Vocational Training and Regional Development" lists the following aspects and criteria of the common evaluation approach: regional framework conditions, program structure, organizational features, pedagogical approach, and procedure in evaluating the success of the program. The approach is to be used to decide where regional and local authorities, rather than national authorities, can act in dealing with unemployment, the restructuring of industries, and the lack of vocational training opportunities. Brief descriptions of 18 program case studies (two in Belgium, two in the Federal Republic of Germany, two in Denmark, four in France, one in Greece, two in Ireland, one in the Netherlands, one in Luxembourg, one in Spain, and two in the United Kingdom) are included to indicate the range of programs that will be assessed systematically in terms of their operability and success in accordance with the criteria. A description of the evaluating team and the type of cooperation needed is followed by a description of the synthesis report planned. (The case studies are to be completed by October 1989 and the results of the synthesis report will be evaluated at an early 1990 meeting.) (CML)

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Author:
Rolf Derenbach
Project Management:
Maria Pierret
Tel.: (030) 88412123

The EC and the Labour Market Oriented Vocational Training Policies of the European Regions: Examples and Evaluations

Results of the CEDEFOP Project "Vocational Training and Regional Development"

A new assignment: examination and evaluation of projects of regional vocational and labour market policies

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Even a few years ago vocational and labour market policies were considered to be solely a state task. The regions and communities were at most required to run the programmes; they could not (and did not want to) decide on which programmes to conduct with what contents. In the meantime the situation has changed radically. Many communities and regional authorities now feel responsible for taking in hand the pressing problems of unemployment, the restructuring of industries, and the lack of vocational training opportunities (with a concurrent lack of trained staff for certain occupations). The tool at their disposal is active vocational training and labour market policies of their own.

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In handling these tasks, the communities and regions can lean more and more on the financial assistance of the European Community (funds from the large structural funds, in particular Social Fund but numerous other programmes as well). Instead of co-financing national programmes there is to be regionalized and thus, more need-oriented employment of funds - this is one of the most important objectives which is to be achieved by the reform of the Structural Fund.

Reason enough for CEDEFOP to scrutinize the scope in which regional and local authorities can act. This has already been done in numerous regional case studies conducted in all of the Member States within the framework of the project "Vocational Training and Regional Development". The findings and the resulting synthesis reports were presented at two large regional conferences held in Berlin in 1974 and in Sevilla in 1987 where they were discussed with the responsible authorities from the regions.

A further step is now being taken with the completed case studies on individual programmes of regional training and labour market policies:

- individual programmes under the responsibility of regional and local authorities will be examined as closely as possible according to a uniform schema and

- these programmes will be assessed systematically in terms of their operability and success in accordance with commonly established criteria.

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I. Aspects and Criteria of the Common Evaluation Approach

The criteria used to describe and evaluate the programmes were established jointly by those involved in the project at a seminar in April 1989. They are as follows:

1. Regional Framework Conditions
- Economic and social problems
- Training requirements, training deficits
- Diversification of the traditional vocational training on offer

2. Programme Structure
- Motives for and objective of the programme
- Responsible bodies and sponsors of the programme and cooperating institutions (e.g. enterprises, universities)
- Financing

3. Organizational Features
- Location and duration
- Training team and trainers' qualifications
- Training contents
- Final examinations/certificates

4. Pedagogical Approach
- Type of teaching aids used, their innovative contents
- Motivation of the participants
- Relation between theoretical and practical training stages

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3. Procedure in Evaluating the Success of the Programme

- Who is evaluating for whom?
- Which indicators are used?
- Transferability of findings

II. Short Description of the Case Studies

Care was taken when selecting the case studies to capture the diversity of the procedure (regional problems, objectives of the programme, instruments, organization, pedagogical approach, financing, etc.).

Two projects in Belgium were selected in the region of Limburg affected by the closing-down of the coalfields (training for skilled occupations in the textile industry and training for the transport industry). A further Belgian project was selected in the southern, rural area of Wallonie (training in the flourishing horticulture sector).

Two projects were examined in the Federal Republic of Germany: an example from Osnabrück (training in the application of new communications and production technologies conducted by the Technische Aus- und Weiterbildungszentrum (technical initial and continuing training centre) in the city of Osnabrück and a programme for the Land of Lower Saxony (training with respect to the use of personal computers in handicraft trades).

Denmark is represented with two case studies. A project on the occupational motivation and training of unemployed women was examined in the region of Aarhus.

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This project focused on providing commercial/technical training for women to enable them to keep pace with the growing demands for higher qualifications made by enterprises in the technological area. The project on the island of Lolland focused on seminars to smooth the way for people wanting to set up their own business. It was hoped to offset the losses of jobs in agriculture and shipbuilding with this project and other regional policy measures. The success - 65 new enterprises have already been established - confirms this "endogenous" approach to the promotion of new businesses.

In France four initiatives were appraised. Each of them was set up for the Lorraine region which was badly affected by the crisis in the steel industry causing the loss of 16 000 jobs:

- training for steel workers, aimed at providing them with a new occupational orientation as one part of an extensive restructuring programme;

- new training opportunities for school leavers with low qualifications in the Departement Moselle; this project made use of the benefits of alternance training in schools and regional enterprises to complement an already widely based training system;

- programmes incorporating vocational guidance, basic vocational training, schemes to combat illiteracy, and vocational training for workers. One particular target group here is also those workers who are not French citizens;

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- training in the new technologies sector, communications technologies for university graduates with a first degree from the university ("Bac + 2"), likewise within the framework of alternance training.

On the island of Crete in Greece, young unemployed people are being instructed in the application of new information technologies. In addition, marketing and management courses are being conducted for employees in agricultural and production cooperatives. Courses are also being set up for locally resident artists and craftsmen to revive and diversify traditional handicrafts.

In Ireland two programmes were examined:

- the "Enterprise Programme" is a nationwide programme to brief and train people interested in setting up their own businesses,

- in the particularly poorly developed south-western part of Ireland (West Cork), a broadly based training initiative is being conducted (setting up a business, marketing strategies in the commercial/industrial sector, product development both general and specifically for the food industry, training of women, forestry training).

In the Netherlands (Province of Groningen), a study was undertaken on training programmes conducted in the adult training centre of the Delfzij community. These programmes were aimed at the unemployed in the metal occupations and new technologies sectors.

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The subject of the evaluation in Luxembourg was the initiatives for unemployed young people and young people who had dropped out of training before completing it.

In Spain (in the region of Murcia), the evaluation focused on practical vocational training for unemployed young people in general and for the employees of a large local chemical company as well as on training within the framework of a programme of the regional employers' organization.

In the United Kingdom two programmes were examined:

- the CITC programme in Northern Ireland: training for women (of both religions) in the area of information technology and
- the TET programme in Wales. This is a project providing broadly based training for the work in cooperatively managed enterprises. The programme is being run by a regional institution which is promoting this example of endogenous regional development in Wales.

III. The Evaluating Team and the Type of Cooperation

Efforts were made to achieve as coherent a method as possible to evaluate the case studies. To ensure this, the group of experts from the above-named countries and representatives of the Commission met in April 1989 to draw up a common evaluation schema.

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This cooperation also meant that the questions - some of them quite tricky - concerning the theoretical aspects of the evaluation of training programmes could be treated at a second meeting of the experts in October 1989. These questions can only be outlined briefly here:

- Which binding set of indicators can be used to describe circumstances as precisely as possible and thus facilitate evaluation?

- How can effects be isolated statistically and empirically so that a decision may be made as to whether they can be considered causative of the success or failure of a programme?

- How can the long-term effects of training programmes be measured, or how can the impact of a training measure be assessed, at least in the regional economic environment?

- Should the authorities conducting the programmes carry out the evaluation themselves (internal evaluation) or should other bodies (external evaluation) be commissioned to do this?

Here one comes up against many instances of research deficits in training research, which cannot be overcome ad hoc.

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IV. The Next Step: The Synthesis Report

Even if every criterion could not be included in each regional case study (because e.g. data were missing), it was nevertheless possible to obtain comparable case studies. Thus, it is now possible to compile a synthesis report covering all the case studies; a member of the team has been assigned this task.

The following considerations will form the basis of this synthesis report (compare the enclosed outline with the following versions):

1. The evaluation always refers to a subject. It is a question of for whom the evaluation is to be carried out. In actual fact, there are three groups working on different levels.

- Evaluation on the micro-level, i.e. for the institution which conducted the programme, for the trainers and participants in the courses.

- Evaluation on the meso-level, i.e. for the institutions responsible regionally and politically.

- Evaluation for the macro-level, i.e. for the authorities of the EC Commission.

2. What is required of an evaluation varies according to which of the three levels is addressed. The second dimension of the evaluation is therefore: evaluation in relation to what?

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- The institutions conducting the programmes are obliged to examine whether the training objectives were correct, whether the methods used were the right ones, whether certificates were obtained on conclusion of the programme and whether employment was found after completing the course.

- The institutions responsible regionally and politically must check whether the target groups were reached, whether the programmes helped to solve social and regional economic problems - ultimately with the aim of determining whether the programmes should be financed in the future or whether the target direction needs to be amended.

- The EC Commission has to look at whether the different kinds of programmes are exemplary in promoting the vocational integration of young people and for combatting long-term unemployment (objectives 3 and 4 of the European Structural Fund) and how it should assess in respect of this a financial contribution to one or the other programme proposal.

3. Finally, the third dimension treats aspects of measurement. This raises the question of the manner of the description and the assessment. Here, too, there will be differences depending on the evaluation level involved:

- The institutions conducting the programmes are particularly concerned with measurement concepts which can be employed for implementing the training assignment. These are indicators which - similar to

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the case in economic analysis - measure the relationship between objectives and resources i.e. training success compared to duration of training, qualifications of the trainers, diversity of the training modules. Added to this are indicators which measure the success of the training programme (drop-out rate, ratio of those who find work).

- The measurement concepts to the fore in the case of the institutions responsible regionally and politically are those which measure the contribution the programmes make towards solving social and regional economic problems, e.g. the extent to which different target groups have been taken into consideration and the ratio of training-related economic impulses (consideration of training requirements, diversification of the economy, ratio of newly-founded enterprises).

- Finally, the EC Commission authorities are mainly interested in indicators which can be used when deciding on applications for support.

V. Final Comments

It is intended to complete the case studies using the results of the discussions at the team's second meeting in October 1989. An attempt will be made to specify more precisely the indicators and assessment criteria which were employed in some of the case studies. The results of the synthesis report will be subjected to critical inspection at a further meeting to be held at the beginning of 1990.

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Outline: Structure of the schema of the synthesis report

Evaluation for whom?	Evaluation in view of which important question?	Measuring concepts
Micro-level		
Institutions conducting training (school, training workshops, training firm, other institutions)	Evaluation of implementation of training assignment	1. Causal indicators e.g. success to duration of course, trainer qualifications, motivation of participants 2. Classic success figures such as drop-out rate, rate of those finding work
Meso-level		
Regional institutions responsible for running the programme (regional, communal authorities, labour offices, social partners)	Evaluation of objectives/ resources used with respect to regional training and labour market policy, regional and economic structural improvement	Impact indicators such as - target groups - shortcomings of initial training - training requirements - effects on labour market - economic diversification - mobilization of endogenous forces
Macro-level		
The EC Commission office (generally DGV) responsible for co-financing the programme	Evaluation of the use of resources from the Structural Fund or from other EC sources	Indicators' for decision-making such as - probability of success - pertinence of objective - combination of course modules - cost/participants - innovative content

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